

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 25-28, and 30-31 are pending in the present application. By way of this reply, independent claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the valve body blocks the first path at the second valve position. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, in Figures 3 and 5 and the accompanying text of the present application. No new matter has been added by these amendments. Claim 1 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

Rejection(s) Under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 25-28, and 30-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,445,065 ("Waldrum"). Independent claim 1 has been amended by this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claim, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Embodiments disclosed in the present application are directed to a valve having a valve body controllable by the pressure of a cleaning fluid. In accordance with one embodiment shown in Figure 5, at a low pressure, the cleaning fluid flows from the inlet 24 through the first outlet 26 (referred to as path A). At a higher pressure, the piston slide element 70 moves toward the left against the spring 52, and the cleaning fluid flows from the inlet 24 through the second outlet 28 (referred to as path B), while path A is blocked by the piston slide element 70. That is,

as the pressure of the cleaning fluid changes, the piston slide element 70 decides through which of paths A and B the cleaning fluid can flow.

Accordingly, independent claim 1 requires, in part, that at a second valve position, the valve body blocks the first path such that *the cleaning fluid substantially does not flow through the first path*, while allowing *the cleaning fluid to flow through the second path*.

With respect to Waldrum, the Examiner has indicated, at page 2 of the instant Office Action, that Waldrum shows a plurality of nozzles 18, an inlet 34, outlets 60, and a valve member 48. Further, the Examiner has asserted that valve 48 at one position can determine flow through the combination of the first and second paths.

However, the Applicant notes that the ball 48 of Waldrum is provided merely to prevent dripping when a spraying action is stopped, and the ball 48 cannot determine through which path a fluid flows (*see* Waldrum, col. 3, line 73 - col. 4, line 10, and col. 4, lines 25 - lines 35).

Consequently, in the spray apparatus of Waldrum, a fluid *either* flows through all paths when in action *or* does not flow at all when not in action. In other words, the ball 48 cannot possibly select the path of the fluid depending upon the fluid pressure.

More specifically, when the fluid from the port 34 pushes the ball 48 against the spring 42 (*i.e.*, the spray apparatus is in action), the fluid can flow from the port 34 through *all* of the provided ports 60 corresponding to the plurality of nozzles 12 (referred to paths 1, 2, 3, ..., n). In contrast, when no fluid is fed from the port 34 (*i.e.*, the spray apparatus is not in action), the spring 42 pushes the ball 48 toward the port 34 to prevent dripping so that no fluid at all flows through paths 1, 2, 3, ..., n.

As can be seen from the above description, in the spray apparatus of Waldrum, there are only two choices, that is, a fluid not flowing or flowing through all paths. No choice can be made between paths by the ball 48. In other words, Waldrum does not suggest that the ball allows the fluid to flow only through, for example, path 1 and not to flow through other paths 1, 3, ..., n. This is because Waldrum intended to provide the ball 48 simply to prevent dripping, but not to select fluid paths. As such, Waldrum fails to teach or suggest that at a second valve position, the valve body blocks the first path such that *the cleaning fluid substantially does not flow through the first path*, while allowing *the cleaning fluid to flow through the second path*, as required by amended independent claim 1.

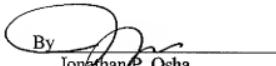
In view of the above, Waldrum fails to show or suggest all limitations of amended independent claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Waldrum for at least the above reasons. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this application to be in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 17102.013001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments